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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

ARMY and DOS review(s) completed.

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

Sharp ground fighting and heavy enemy mortar attacks were reported over wide areas of the country during the weekend. In political developments, some tentative efforts have been reported in military and civilian circles to resolve the Ky-Thieu rift.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

Sharp ground fighting between ARVN/ROK units and Viet Cong/NVA forces in Thua Thien and Phu Yen provinces, coupled with heavy Communist mortar attacks against US Army bases in Quang Ngai and Binh Duong Provinces, highlighted this weekend's military action in South Vietnam (Paras. 1-5). In the western highlands, five US Army battalions continued to press Operation GREELEY in search of the 24th NVA Regiment in Kontum Province, but no significant contact developed (Paras. 6-8).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

There are indications of tentative efforts in some military and civilian circles to try to resolve the rivalry between Premier Ky and Chief of State Thieu (Paras. 1-3). Considerable activity is under way, particularly by Ky's supporters, to complete 10-man candidate lists for the upper house election (Paras. 4-6).

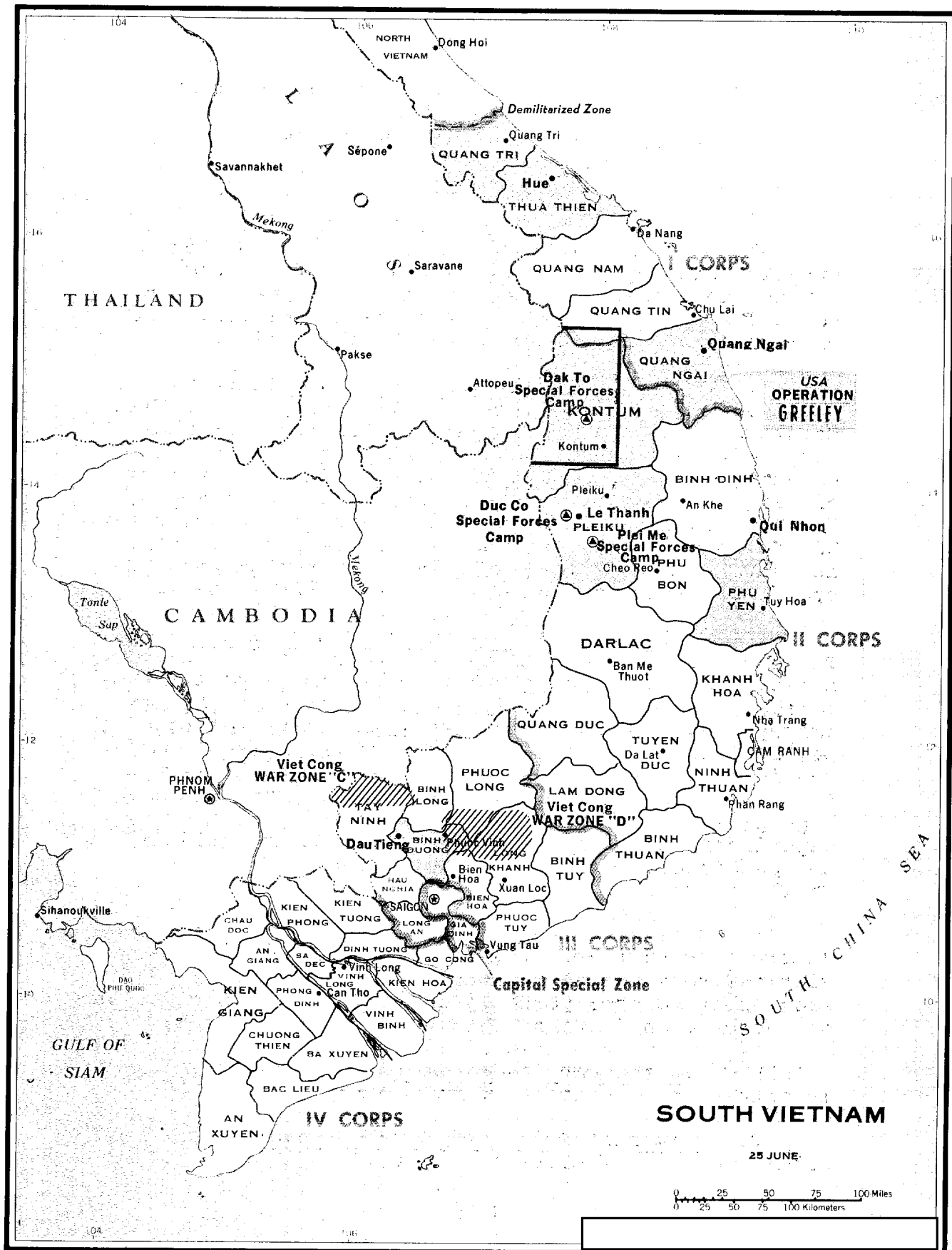
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IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) airborne and South Korean (ROK) infantry units initiated heavy contacts this weekend with Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces in Thua Thien and Phu Yen provinces. On the Communist side, enemy gun crews launched heavy mortar attacks against US Army bases in southern I Corps and northwestern III Corps.

2. On 25 June, an ARVN airborne battalion engaged an estimated Communist main force battalion approximately 12 miles east-southeast of Hue, the capital of northern coastal Thua Thien Province. Supported by US Marine artillery and tactical aircraft and by USAF AC-47 gunships, ARVN forces claim to have killed 107 enemy troops in the nine-hour fire fight, while losing six killed and 48 wounded. While the enemy force in contact has not been firmly identified, it was probably a subordinate of the Communist Northern Front military command. The Northern Front controls a combat maneuver force equivalent to a division and is responsible for enemy main force operations in lower Quang Tri Province and in all of Thua Thien Province.

3. Meanwhile, in Phu Yen Province, on the night of 24-25 June, company-strength elements of the ROK Capital Infantry Division inflicted losses of 43 killed on an undetermined-size enemy force during the conduct of a local security sweep operation 16 miles south-southwest of Qui Nhon. There were no ROK casualties. The enemy unit may have been subordinate to the 5th NVA Division, elements of which have been increasingly active in the province in recent weeks.

Major Communist Actions

4. In Quang Ngai Province, on 23 June, the command post and associated artillery elements of the 3rd Brigade/US 25th Infantry Division located some 24 miles south-southeast of Quang Ngai city were shelled by an estimated 30-40 rounds of 82-mm. mortar fire and an undetermined number of 57-mm. recoilless

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rifle rounds. Three Americans were killed and 51 wounded. The airstrip of a nearby US Army aviation support company was also struck by mortar fire, resulting in heavy damage to five helicopters.

5. On 24 June, the US Army airfield at Dau Tieng, 40 miles northwest of Saigon in Binh Duong Province, received an estimated 100 rounds of 82-mm. mortar fire from probable elements of the 7th NVA Division. Forty US military personnel were wounded and 30 helicopters damaged, 17 of which will require major repairs. Dau Tieng, in addition to serving as the base camp of the 3rd Brigade/US 4th Infantry Division, has frequently been used as the principal staging point for major allied sweep operations into the War Zone "C" and "D" areas of III Corps. The airfield is primarily a helicopter facility with a normal complement of 30 aircraft. Full operations were resumed at Dau Tieng within ten hours after the attack.

Operation GREELEY Continues

6. Two battalions of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade, reinforced by three battalions of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division, continued to press their major spoiling campaign--Operation GREELEY--against the 24th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment in western Kontum Province this weekend, but without significant enemy contact. Documents captured during the 22-23 June engagement near Dak To, which involved a 130-man company from the US 173rd and an enemy force initially estimated at two companies, have now identified the unit in contact as the 6th Battalion/24th NVA Regiment.

7. Revised official casualty figures from that action have downgraded enemy losses from an estimated 479 killed to 106 by actual body count. COMUSMACV cautions, however, that reports from aerial observers and armed helicopter pilots reconnoitering the battlefield during the action still suggest that the Communists sustained very heavy casualties, probably in excess of 400 killed. COMUSMACV believes that these aerial reports take on further validity in view of the heavy artillery and air strikes mounted against enemy positions in the area and the fact that the

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[redacted]

enemy was fighting only a company and, nevertheless, elected to break contact at mid-day. The actual number of total enemy killed was impossible to ascertain by body count on the ground since the Communists had 24 hours to clear the battlefield of their dead before US troops returned to the scene of the conflict. US losses in the 22-23 engagement remain at 80 killed and 34 wounded.

8. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Front is controlling offensive action in western Kontum, probably in an attempt to divert allied forces from the Front's principal strategic area of operations in western Pleiku Province. Intensified reconnaissance of allied positions in the Duc Co/Le Thanh and Plei Me areas of western Pleiku by tactical military intelligence elements of the B-3 Front is continuing. This enemy activity [redacted]

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indications that the initiation of large-scale hostilities by the 24th Regiment in adjacent Kontum Province may be largely intended to divert attention from an impending major offensive thrust by the Front's equivalent of four subordinate NVA regiments against the above mentioned targets in Pleiku Province.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. There are indications of tentative efforts being made in some military and civilian circles to try to settle the growing rift between Premier Ky and Chief of State Thieu, but no indications that these are likely to be successful.

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2. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] rumors are afoot that II Corps commander General Vinh Loc may be trying to groom himself as a compromise military candidate in the event that the Ky-Thieu impasse persists. Loc has been generally judged a Ky supporter, but his true sentiments are not known and he is widely regarded as an opportunist.

3. An effort by civilians--possibly with Premier Ky's backing--may be under way to try to bring about Thieu's withdrawal. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] members of the Saigon city council have been visiting provinces in the delta to urge provincial council members to attend a conference in Saigon on 27-28 June. Reportedly, other emissaries are visiting provinces to the north of Saigon. The purpose of the meeting in Saigon would be to have the provincial councils issue a statement proposing Ky for the presidency and Thieu for membership in the senate in order to terminate their present rivalry and the possibility of later reprisals.

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Presidential and Senatorial Election Tickets

4. A text of Premier Ky's 22 June news conference published by a Saigon newspaper quotes him as promising to name his vice-presidential running mate on Saturday, 24 June, but no such announcement has been reported. Ky said only that his running mate would be a journalist-- a possible reference to Hu Huu Tuong, a southern writer, political theoretician, and professor of Buddhist studies who has recently been mentioned in this regard.

5. On 23 June, retired General Tran Van Don emphatically denied to US Embassy officers rumors that he might run with Ky. Don said that he still planned to head a 10-man ticket for the senate, and that politician Tran Van Tuyen would head an associated ticket. He reiterated that he preferred Ky above all other presidential candidates, but said he had not yet firmly decided whether or not to support him. Don has been reported to be actively cooperating with Ky, but the embassy believes that he may still be "fishing" about for the best possible political deal.

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